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# PAPERS READ

BEFORE THE

## LANCASTER COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

*R. K. Buess*

SEPTEMBER 2, 1904.

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THE WABANK HOUSE.

MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER MEETING.

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## THE WABANK HOUSE.

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Lancaster city enjoys almost unequalled advantages of location in many respects. She sits on an elevated limestone ridge, which secures her the advantage of excellent health and satisfactory drainage. Along her eastern and southern borders winds one of the most beautiful rivers to be seen anywhere, affording visions of picturesque scenery and beauty excelled nowhere, as I believe, on this continent. Around her, beyond her own territorial limits, is spread a country than which the sun in his course shines on none richer or more beautiful, and which vies with the garden spots of the world. Take along with these the general aggregate of her population, in intelligence, in industry, in wealth, and, may I not add, in morals, and we have an aggregation of conditions and circumstances of the most desirable kind, and which, all things considered, make her one of the most desirable places on the globe to be born, live and die in.

And yet she lacks some things which

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The writer takes pleasure in acknowledging the valuable assistance he has received during the preparation of this sketch of Jacob M. Frantz, Mr. William T. Youart and Dr. J. P. Roebuck. The first two named were very intimately connected with the Wabank House from the time of its erection until its removal to Lititz, and are, I believe, the only survivors of all who were once connected with its early management. Although Mr. Frantz is now an octogenarian, his memory of the events connected with the Wabank House is fresh and correct, as I have verified both by the printed and written records.

a very considerable portion of mankind believes essential to its comfort and happiness. No ocean surf is beating against her rocky beaches. No lofty mountains encompass her 'round about. The average pleasure-seeker of to-day demands these pleasant adjuncts to supposed human happiness and felicity, and they are not to be had here. At least, not in the degree which a pleasure-seeking people require. It is true that Rocky Springs offers to tired humanity quiet and rest around her pretty water and under the shade of the forest primeval. Captain Peoples will float you on the Lady Gay a mile adown the Conestoga and then offer you a refreshing dip in the Conestoga waters, generally transparent, but often in need of the filtration it does not get. So you can easily see that we are still lacking in a few things to complete our happiness and draw to us the hundreds and thousands of pleasure and sight-seekers which other places command when the dog days come upon us.

#### **The One Thing Needed.**

Lancaster has always had its "upper 400," of which half a dozen may be the genuine article and the remainder bogus, but that is something not pertinent to the matter of this short paper. Some of these—those who could afford it and some who could not—took themselves to the springs and the mountains when midsummer came along, and forgot at Saratoga and elsewhere the little worries that may have disturbed their waking hours at home. It finally dawned on some of them that perhaps Lancaster could in some way be turned into a summer resort, which would not necessitate their going elsewhere for rest and health, but by which an honest penny might be turned into their own pockets. True, we had no medicinal springs, hot or

cold, no waters to which invalids might resort, but we had good water and scenery equal to the best. They realized half a hundred years ago, more fully, I fear, than we do to-day, that no more beautiful river runs its waters to the ocean than the Conestoga, and that no more genuinely attractive scenery than is to be found along its banks exists anywhere in the State.

The more these old-timers thought the matter over the more they became persuaded of the feasibility of establishing a place on our river that would not only provide an excellent place to go for themselves, whenever they sought relaxation from their toils, but to which, through their influence, people from all over the State and beyond it might be drawn for the same purpose. But they not only thought about it—they acted.

Four miles southwest of Lancaster city, on the banks of the Conestoga, stood an old-time tavern. It was a favorite resort for these old-time good livers. It was a short hour's drive from the city, and there they were accustomed to resort as often as three or four or half a dozen could be got together. Tradition says—and also some of those who were accustomed to take part in those gatherings—that high revels were carried on there. The table was up to the full Lancaster county standard. The liquors equalled or surpassed the table, for was there not a Reigart's wine store to draw upon! No matter if they did not get home the same day. The beds were soft and clean, the accommodations ample; so it really could not matter much if the "high jinks" continued one day or three days, nights included. If so much good living and good-fellowship was to be got out of a little tavern, what possibilities seemed to

be held out in a big, four-story building, especially adapted to such purposes, and to which the whole outside world was to be invited!

#### **The Wabank Company Organized.**

They cogitated, they resolved and they acted. That old spot was endeared to them through association, and was, besides, eligible in all respects, so they determined Lancaster's new summer resort should be founded on that self-same spot. And it was. A stock company was formed. Twenty men composed the original membership of the company. There were forty shares of stock, and the price of it was \$1,000 per share. The following were the original shareholders: William B. Fordney, John F. Shroder, Christian Kieffer, Michael Malone, Christopher Hager, Thomas Baumgardner, John Black, Elliot Lane, William Mathiot, David Longenecker, Charles Boughter, Edward S. Hubley, Michael Barry, Abraham W. Russel, William Carpenter, Jacob M. Frantz, Richard McGrann, Sr., Jacob Bausman, all of Lancaster, and John G. Brenner and John Schafner, of Philadelphia.

These men incorporated themselves under the laws of the State and procured a seal. Prior to this they had cast about them for a suitable name. To make the matter more interesting and to advertise their scheme more fully, a prize of \$25 was offered to the person who should suggest the most suitable name, to be selected by a committee named for the purpose. Of the many names received, that sent in by Mrs. Mathiot, daughter of Mr. Christopher Hager, and the wife of one of the subscribing stockholders, was accepted. It was WABANK. The name is supposed to have had an Indian origin, but it has been impossible to verify that fact.

### Some of the Early Owners.

But I am not proceeding chronologically. The site was, of course, selected and the land purchased before the place was christened. The old tavern, a barn, a large three-story grist mill, saw mill, lath mill, miller's house and fifteen acres and sixteen perches of land, in two tracts, were bought at Lock No. 3 of the Conestoga Navigation Company. It also included the surplus water power of the Conestoga river at that point, beyond what was needed for the canal and the mills. The sum paid for the several properties was \$13,200.

I have examined the titles to the property as far back as 1829, when both tracts, one of 14 acres and 144 perches and the other of 32 perches, were sold by Jacob Haverstick to Jacob Huber, who placed a mortgage on it in 1833 for \$3,760 in favor of Mr. John Bausman. Mr. Huber, having fallen into financial troubles, made an assignment to Christopher Hager, who then sold the property to William B. Fordney and Jacob Bausman, in equal shares. On January 3, 1854, William B. Fordney and Jacob Bausman sold the lands and tenements to "The Wabank House Company," consisting of the twenty gentlemen already mentioned and for the price as before stated.

Mr. Mathiot having died, James L. Reynolds, his administrator, on December 29, 1854, sold to the surviving members of the company the share of the former for the sum of \$526. The Wabank House was in process of erection at that date. On December 17, 1855, Emanuel Shaeffer, the President of the Lancaster Saving Institution, sold to "The Wabank House on the banks of the Conestoga, in the county of Lancaster," "all the estate, right, title, interest, property claim and de-



mand whatsoever the party of the first part had in law or equity or otherwise to all those buildings known as the Wabank House." This was evidently the Charles Boughter interest, although not so mentioned. Mr. Boughter's interest in the settlement of his affairs no doubt fell to the Lancaster Saving Institution, of which he was formerly the Treasurer.

On October 8, 1855, the already mentioned owners, who had purchased the two tracts of land, consisting of 15 acres and 16 perches, by deed transferred the same to "The Wabank House." No sum is mentioned; they sold the property to themselves as a corporation.

#### **The Company Goes to Work.**

A Building Committee, consisting of John Black, Chairman; William Carpenter, Treasurer; Edward Hubley, Jacob M. Frantz and Jacob Bausman, was appointed, and these set energetically to work to erect the building. Mr. Black not desiring to attend to the duties of Chairman, that office was shouldered on Mr. Frantz, who acted in that capacity until the work was completed. Peter W. Fry was the master builder, and received \$1.50 per day for superintending the work. There were twenty-three carpenters employed under him, whose wages were 87½ cents per day! Where is the master carpenter to-day who would superintend a big job for \$1.50 per diem, and where the carpenters who would work for 87½ cents per day?

Mr. Frantz, whose farm was close by, hauled all the stone and other material that entered into the structure and hired all the mechanics and other labor on the work. Altogether, a large number of men were employed, and many of them boarded with Mr. Frantz.

It was thought in the beginning that \$20,000 would build the house, and that the cost of the property, including its equipment for service, would amount to as much more, but before they got through the total expenditures reached \$60,000. It had been agreed at the outset, however, that the cost incurred by the committee, whatever it might be, should be assessed pro rata on all the shares. The company consequently found itself with a pretty heavy load on its shoulders, and wholly uncertain how their venture would in the end turn out. They were not a long time in finding out all about it.

#### **The First Landlady.**

It was not the purpose of the company to rent the Wabank House to some hotel-keeper for a fixed sum, but they believed there was money in the scheme, and they wanted it for themselves. Their aim was to secure a suitable person to run the establishment at a fixed salary, they to control the affair in all other particulars. The intention at first was that Mr. W. E. Youart should run the house. He had managed the small tavern on the property so successfully, was popular, and it was, therefore, the intention to put him in charge of the new and larger one. However, the person finally agreed upon was a Mrs. Ann Haines, widow of Captain Frederick Haines, of Donegal, who had previously, or was at that time, conducting successfully a hotel in the borough of Columbia. She was a member of the Guy family, of Baltimore, which was noted for its successful hotel proprietors, and there was no doubt that she had many of the elements that go into the making of a successful landlord. At any rate, her services were secured and she was installed in her new position in the summer of 1855. She was paid \$700 for her services during the season.

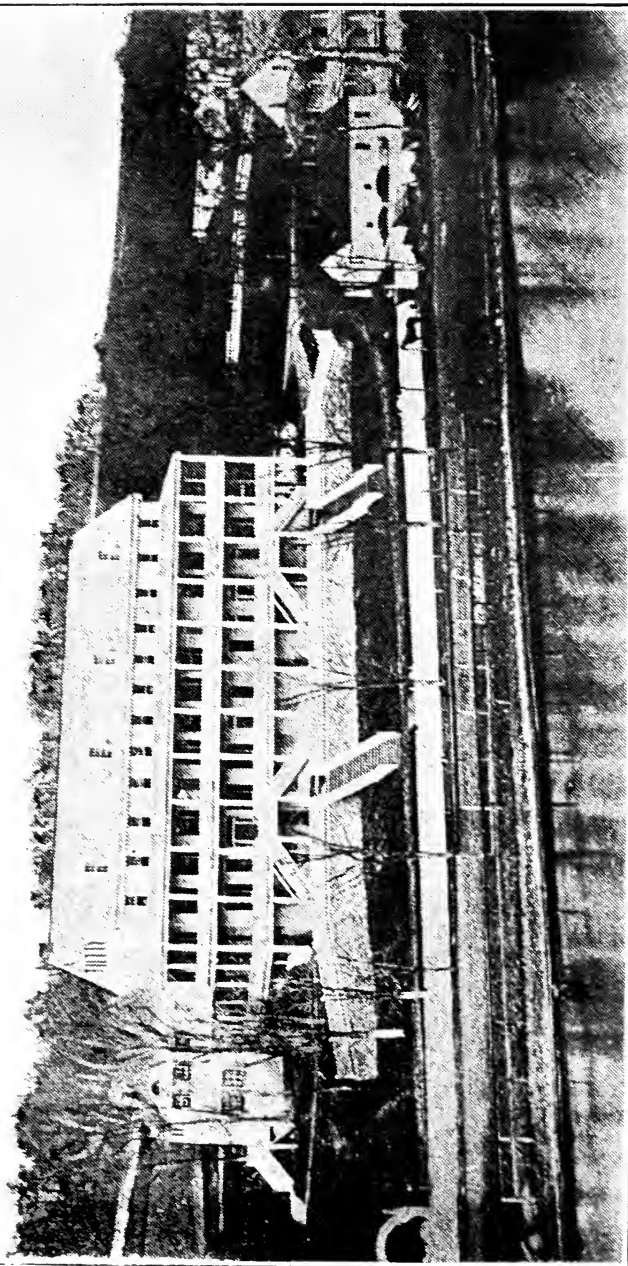
Dr. Thomas L. Budd, a member of the well-known Budd family, of New Jersey, was at that time, and had been for some years previously, a music teacher in this city. I knew him intimately and saw him every day. In some way—largely through the influence of John F. Shroder, who was a stockholder in the company, and whose sister, Sabina Shroder, he (Budd) subsequently married—he was made the general agent of the concern. I think he attended to the purchase of supplies, the comfort of visitors, and, perhaps, the clerical duties also, but of this I am not sure. One thing, however, I do remember distinctly, and that was that at Dr. Budd's solicitation I wrote two short articles for one of the Lancaster newspapers, which one I do not recollect. One of these was a very laudatory notice of Mrs. Haines, who was just about to enter on the duties of her position, and the other was an equally laudatory puff of Dr. Budd himself, who was also about being inducted into his new calling. Like all other young men, then and since, I took a pride in these early contributions to the newspapers and filed them away carefully. I have come across them frequently since, and it was my intention to reproduce them in this sketch, to which they might, perhaps, have contributed some interesting facts bearing on the early events connected with the Wabank House movement, but a very careful search for these early literary productions has failed to bring them to light. Perhaps it is well that such is the case, because that was fifty years ago, and it is more than likely I might not be as proud of them now as I was then.

#### **The Hotel as it Looked.**

After the building was completed nothing was left undone to give the



California



WABANK HOUSE: ERECTED ON THE BANKS OF THE CONESTOGA, IN 1855; REMOVED TO LITITZ  
IN 1863-4; DESTROYED BY FIRE ON JULY 31, 1873.

new enterprise a good send-off. The house, as the accompanying cut shows, was an imposing structure, of four stories and an attic, 105 feet long and 45 feet wide. The location was an attractive one. The wide verandas around the entire structure on the first, second and third stories were an attractive feature. It was opened with a "hop," which was attended by a large crowd of people from this city, as well as the immediate neighborhood. In fact, it was customary to give one of these hops every week during the season. "The Junior Bachelors" and various other social organizations held their reunions and dances there. I remember well of going there to one of the earliest—perhaps the earliest—of these social gatherings, and a number of the occurrences of that evening are still present in my memory. Among the names of the incorporators you will recognize some of the best of our citizens. They were a social, pleasure-loving company of men, and some of their number were there almost every day. Often they remained two or three days and nights, and had, no doubt, what they went for—a jolly good time—which may, in part, at least, have compensated them for their subsequent money losses in the venture.

Whether these jolly good fellows had a "feast of reason" at their "Noctes Wabankianae" symposiums I am unable to say from actual knowledge, and there was no "Kit North" to record their merry quips and wise sayings, but I can speak more positively about the "flow of soul" (and bowl), for with mine own eyes did I behold it.

#### **Looking for Patronage.**

But at the same time these persons were men of affairs and recognized the place could not be supported by local patronage alone. In fact, it was

the monied pleasure seekers from the cities whose patronage was sought after and catered to. A notable occasion in the history of the enterprise was when the Lancaster Bar gave a grand banquet to the Supreme Court of the State. One hundred tickets were sold on that occasion, at a cost of five dollars per plate. It was rumored at the time that the old and well-known maxim, "As sober as a Judge," did not hold good on that occasion. It was, no doubt, the one exception to the rule.

On another occasion the State Medical Society also held their annual session at Wabank, no doubt at the instigation of the local Medical Society. The talk at the time was that the doctors had as good a time as the Judges, and passed through similar experiences. I would gladly contradict these reports if I could, but there is not a doctor living in this city to-day who joined in the festivities.

Mr. James Lytle succeeded Mrs. Haines in the management, and was the presiding genius of the house during the season of 1856. He had also been one of the landlords of the old hotel, and boarded some of the workmen engaged on the new one. Nothing notable occurred during his incumbency, so far as I have been able to ascertain.

Some of the other notable occurrences on that historic spot may be briefly alluded to. In 1857 Messrs. Trout and Weaver took charge of the place and opened it for the summer on June 18. In that year the annual "Battalion Day" for that district was held at Wabank. It is said to have been a great and glorious occasion. Patriotism and firewater were on tap in about equal quantities, and the supply of both was virtually inexhaustible. General Daniel Herr and

Colonel O. J. Dickey were the reviewers of the cornstalk squad on that occasion. It was a great day for Wabank—and for the militia.

In 1861, when the great Northern heart was fired by an attack on Fort Sumpter, there was a grand flag-raising and demonstration at Wabank. Eloquence flowed in such streams that the usually calm Conestoga threatened to overflow its banks out of sheer proximity. Our fellow townsman, Dr. S. T. Davis (who ought to be a member of this Society) is said to have made a stirring address on the occasion, and two days afterwards proved his sincerity and the faith that was in him by enlisting as a private in Company H, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry.

The cuisine of the Wabank House was always excellent, a fact to which I can personally testify, and was one of its strong features. Its waffle and catfish suppers were famous, and drew many a friend of good living to the place. Indeed, at one time, so large was the number of visitants, transient and for longer periods, that a force of forty colored waiters was employed, and the place gave promise of proving a permanent success.

#### **The State Medical Society Meets There.**

On May 10, 1858, Messrs. Youart and Duchman, as managers, opened the season for that year. On May 26, the State Medical Society of Pennsylvania began its eleventh annual session in Russell's Hall, South Queen street. Dr. John L. Atlee was the President that year and called the Society to order. Communications were read from Prof. Wickersham, then Principal of the Millersville Normal School, and Dr. Gerhart, President of Franklin and Marshall College, ex-

tending invitations to visit these two institutions. On the next day, Thursday, May 27, these invitations were carried out. Carriages were furnished by citizens for the occasion, and they first were taken to the college grounds, where Dr. Gerhart and the faculty showed them over the place and took them through the buildings. From the college they were taken to Millersville, where Dr. Wickersham and his colleagues escorted them through the school buildings. A meeting was held in the chapel, where Dr. Cassidy introduced the medical body to the large audience assembled in an eloquent address, to which Dr. Wickersham made a response.

But the event of the day was still to come. After these proceedings were over the party was driven over to Wabank, where, the chronicler says, they were received with a true military air by Captain John H. Duchman, who, with William T. Youart, was "running" the house that season. A hasty lunch was served to the hungry doctors, who had eaten nothing since breakfast. But that was only a sort of an appetizer to the sumptuous banquet which soon followed. The State Medical Society was not then the large body it has since become, but there were, nevertheless, about forty members present. When they sat down to the banquet they and their friends numbered about 150 persons. The order given by the Master of Ceremonies was brief and to the point. It was: "If you have stomachs, prepare to fill them now."

#### **An Unexcelled Menu.**

To show what the Wabank House could do in the way of getting up a banquet, I am able to reproduce the original menu, as follows:

**BILL OF FARE.****SOUP.**

Turtle.

**FISH.**

Halibut,

Black.

**BOILED.**

Ham, Buffalo Tongue, Chicken.

**SIDE DISHES.**

Fricasseed Chicken,

Turtle Chicken, Snail Chicken,

Welsh Chicken, Plain Chicken,

Lobster Salad, Oyster Salad,

Oysters Stewed,

Scalloped Oysters,

Macaroni, Italian,

Smothered Chicken.

**ROAST.**

Beef, Mutton, Chicken,

Beef a la mode,

Turkey Cranberry Sauce,

Currant Jelly.

**VEGETABLES.**

New Potatoes, Old Potatoes,

Asparagus, Green Peas,

Stewed Onions, Beets.

**PASTRY AND DESSERT.**

Cocoanut Pie,

Rhubarb Pie, Green Currant Pie.

Green Gooseberry Pie,

English Cream, Saratoga Pudding,

Spiced Pudding,

French Jellies, Puffs, Champagne Jelly,

Wine Jelly.

Ice Cream, Pyramids, Water Ice,

Oranges, Almonds and Raisins.

**WINE LIST.**

Madeira, Imperial, Cherry.

Amonlellado,

Claret, St. Julien.

Haut Brion, Port, Old Port,

Champagne,

Heidseck, Guisler.

Thère was some witty speechmaking, of which a record is still preserved, and which I wish could be reproduced here. Before leaving Lancaster, the Society appointed a committee to draft suitable resolutions relative to their entertainment, of which the following is a copy:

**Praise From the Medicos.**

"Resolved, That the excellent style and sumptuousness of the repast furnished on the above occasion by Messrs. Youart and Duchman, of the 'Wabank House,' merits our hearty approbation and fully sustains the high reputation they have heretofore enjoyed as efficient caterers.

"Resolved, That the courteous manner and obliging disposition of the proprietors, with the very convenient arrangement of the buildings, the varied surrounding scenery and the beautiful and healthy country in which it is situated, eminently fits it for a delightful summer rest."

The State Medical Society was the guest of the Lancaster County Medical Society, which was organized in 1844, or three years before the State Society itself. Of all the medical men then present from this county not one is living to-day. The Lancaster Bar also attended this banquet, but theirs was a case of so many dollars per plate. It is a fact deserving of record that not one of the more than forty members of the Medical Society whose names are on record as having attended that banquet is living to-day.

On July 15, 1858, one of those pleasant hops for which the house had become famous was held. There was boating on the river, rambles over the hills, then a sumptuous supper, to which seventy sat down, and then the usual hop.

#### **The Great Military Demonstration.**

But the year 1858 was to see another and different demonstration at Wabank before the close of the season. On September 8, Brigadier General Bartram A. Shaeffer issued brigade order No. 2, from the brigade headquarters at Lancaster, ordering the companies composing the brigades to parade and encamp for discipline, inspection and review at Wabank, on the banks of the Conestoga, on Tuesday, the 28th day of September, the encampment to commence at 12 o'clock, m., of that day, to continue until Friday, October 1, the encampment to be called "Camp Conestoga." The companies composing the brigade were as follows:



	Men.
Jackson Rifles, H. A. Hambright, Captain .....	90
Lancaster Fencibles, John H. Duch- man, Captain.....	14
Earl Infantry, Isaac Holl, Captain..	47
Maytown Infantry, J. E. Gebhart, Captain .....	28
Manheim Rifles, F. Ensminger, Cap- tain .....	38
Washington Rifles, D. F. Morenzy, Captain .....	13

The brigade took up its line of march from Centre Square at 4 o'clock p. m., and marched to Wabank. About 100 tents were pitched on the grounds. On the 30th there was a grand review. At least 2,000 persons were present to see it. There were several bands in attendance. The whole affair was a most creditable one. The grounds, with its tents and handsome flags, presented a beautiful sight. About 8 o'clock in the evening there was a fine display of fireworks. Then came the hop, in which 800 persons participated. During the day the road between Lancaster and Wabank was so crowded with vehicles containing the wealth and beauty of the city that it was difficult to make one's way to the encampment. It was, perhaps, the greatest day in the Wabank House history.

#### The Decline Sets In.

During the following season, 1859, the house was again opened, this time by Mr. Youart alone. There was little effort that I have been able to discover to exploit the place through announcements and advertising. Nothing is on record as to the date of the summer opening, but it was going by the middle of June. Some laudatory notices of the establishment appeared occasionally in Philadelphia newspapers, in which the house was pronounced to be unusually clean for such a place and the terms very favorable. There was the usual number of "hops," but no special or notable functions marked the year. The place had

evidently seen its days of greatest prosperity and its popularity was on the wane.

All this was even more noticeable during the following season of 1860. Beyond the single fact that the Wabank House "would be opened on June 14 under the management of Mr. Youart," I have been unable to find a single reference to the place. Even the State Medical Society, which several seasons before had been so lavish in its praise, had forgotten it in 1859 and 1860, and held its sessions elsewhere. No effort even appears to have been made to keep up its original reputation. Coaches were still held in readiness at the Exchange Hotel in this city, of which Mr. Youart was also the proprietor, to carry intending visitors to the big house on the Conestoga, while the boats and fishing tackle, which were always in readiness to afford diversion to the occupants, were less and less put to active use.

#### **Part of the Property Sold.**

In bringing down the history of the Wabank House itself to this period, some very important matters relative to the corporation have been temporarily set aside. I now go back and take these up. As will be remembered, the Hotel was only a portion of the real estate owned. There was a considerable tract of land, a merchant mill, and other mills, a smaller tavern property, tenant houses and outbuildings. As the milling business was no part of the scheme of the Wabank people, nor farming neither, it was resolved to dispose of the land and mill property and retain only the hotel. A committee was accordingly appointed to dispose of such part of the real estate as was not needed to carry on the hotel. In the only fragment of the minutes which still exists I find the following:

"At a special meeting of the Stockholders of 'The Wabank House on the banks of the Conestoga, in the county of Lancaster,' held at the office of the Company in the city of Lancaster, on the 24th day of March, 1855, called for the purpose of giving authority to sell and dispose of a part of the real estate of said Campany, there were present Jacob Bausman, President; David Longenecker, Elliot Lane, William Carpenter, Abraham W. Russell, C. Hager, Michael Barry, Richard McGrann, Sr., John F. Shroder, W. B. Fordney, John Black and Jacob M. Frantz, being a majority in number and value of the stockholders. The Committee appointed at a meeting of the stockholders on the 12th day of November, 1855, to make arrangement to sell and dispose of the Mills, and water power belonging to said Company, make report that they sold the Grist and Merchant Mills, saw Mills, the small new dwelling-house and a piece of ground belonging thereto, containing by estimation about one acre. Together with the surplus water and water powers of the Conestoga creek at Dam No. 3 of the Conestoga Navigation, as the said Company now holds the same, excepting so much thereof as will be required to work said Company's pump to pump water in the Basin, etc., with certain other reservations and privileges, to Mr. Daniel Overholzer, for the sum of Twelve Thousand Dollars, to be paid on the first day of April next, when a deed for the same is to be made to him.

"Which report on motion was received, and on motion it was unanimously resolved that the President be and hereby is authorized and directed to sign, execute, acknowledge and deliver a deed of conveyance under the Common or Corporate seal of said Company

according to law to the Said Daniel Oberholzer, for the said premises sold to him, upon the payment of the purchase money according to the contract." The deed was signed by Jacob Bausman, President; and attested by the Secretary, who was George K. Reed.

#### **An Attempt to Sell the Rest.**

But after the several years' experiment had shown to the company that financial success was very improbable, and, while doing their best to keep the Wabank House going, they decided to get rid of it, if possible. A few seasons had only served to accumulate a heavy debt, and the future seemed to hold out no bow of promise. To get rid of the property was decided upon.

An effort was made to sell the property at public outcry on the 16th of May, 1857, as the following advertisement, taken from a city paper of that day, shows:

#### **VALUABLE PROPERTY**

##### **For Sale.**

The beautiful property known as "The Wabank House," on the Conestoga, four miles below the city of Lancaster, with fourteen acres of land belonging thereto, will be sold by public vendue on Saturday, the 16th day of May next, at 2 o'clock in the afternoon at the public house of William T. Youart, Exchange Hotel, in the city of Lancaster.

If desired by purchasers, the old Tavern House, with a part of the grand and the small house with three quarters of an acre of ground thereto, at the lower end of the property, will be sold separately.

Possession and an indisputable title will be given immediately.

Terms will be accommodating and be made known at the sale.

The proprietors of this beautiful property find it out of their power to give it the attention it deserves, and, therefore, have determined to dispose of it, and believe that to a person capable of managing a house and grounds of this kind this sale presents a rare chance of acquiring a valuable property at a very low price, as the sale will be peremptory and without reserve.

Persons desiring to view the premises or any information respecting it, will please call on or address either of the undersigned, Lancaster, Pa.

JACOB BAUSMAN,  
JACOB M. FRANTZ,  
WM. CARPENTER,  
Committee to sell.

#### **Foreclosure Proceedings Instituted.**

This effort to sell the property was a failure. No doubt, every one was aware that the enterprise had not been a success, and no one was found willing to embark in it anew. But something had to be done. It will be remembered that Jacob Huber, the previous owner, had placed a mortgage on the property. That had never been paid. Mr. John Bausman, who held the mortgage, was induced to foreclose it. It was accordingly sold by Sheriff B. F. Rowe, on April 19, 1858, for \$9,150, to Philip Bausman, who was given a deed bearing that date. Six months later Mr. Bausman transferred his deed to George K. Reed and Jacob Bausman, for \$9,150, who were the purchasing committee of the old company.

#### **Sold and Removed.**

Bur Mr. Oberholzer was a miller and not a landlord, and about the first thing he did after acquiring the property was to look after a purchaser for the hotel property. Such a person he found in the person of Mr. Samuel Lichtenthaler, of Lititz, and in 1863 he sold the building—not the ground on which it stood—to the last-named gentleman for the sum of \$4,000. That seems a very small sum for so costly a structure, but it must be remembered that by this time it had become an elephant on the hands of its respective owners, to be got rid of on the best terms obtainable. It must furthermore be remembered that it had to be taken down carefully, by piece-meal, loaded on wagons, and then hauled a distance of twelve miles, and

again erected in its new home at Lititz.

Mr. Lichtenthaler began the dismantling of the structure in the summer or fall of 1863. In October one of the carpenters engaged in taking it down fell from the third story and was, I believe, fatally injured. During the fall and winter of 1863-4 he was engaged in transporting the material from Wabank to Lititz. It required one hundred four-horse wagon loads to do the job. The work of re-erecting the structure on the public square of Lititz was, meanwhile, carried on with all despatch, and by July 4, 1864, the new house, under the name of the Lititz Springs Hotel, was thrown open for business. In erecting the new structure its original dimensions were retained, and, in addition, a large dome and observatory were placed on the top, overlooking the country for great distances in all directions.

No doubt, it proved more of a financial success in its new home than in the old. In 1867 Mr. Lichtenthaler died. He was succeeded by Mr. Geo. P. Greider in the ownership and management. A few years later the property was sold at Sheriff's sale to Mr. John Butler, of New York city, who conducted the hotel for several years.

#### **Destroyed by Fire.**

On July 31, 1873, the Lititz Springs Hotel, formerly the Wabank House, was destroyed by fire. On that day, while the guests, some twenty or thirty in number, were sitting at the dinner table, they were startled by the cry of fire, which was only too true, and soon all Lititz was hurrying towards the doomed house. The fire was caused by a defective flue that passed through the servants' quarters. The guests rushed to their rooms, and most of them succeeded in saving

most of their belongings. One lady, a Mrs. Kauffman, of Philadelphia, lost clothing and jewelry to the amount of \$300.

Telegrams were received in this city at twenty minutes of 2 o'clock, saying that the entire town was threatened with destruction and asking for immediate aid. Mayor Pyfer directed Chief Engineer Harry Howell to send the Union engine to Lititz. Still more urgent telegrams came, and the Washington engine was also sent. The engines arrived in time to prevent the spread of the fire, but not to save the hotel. Two local engines were also of much assistance. There was also a bucket brigade in two lines reaching from the hotel down to the spring; on one side were women and on the other men; the women passed the empty buckets down the line and the men brought them up their line.

Only the brick wing of the building was saved. This was an old structure and the new one was built against it. That there was danger of the town burning down was seen from the fact that the Kemper House, over in Warwick, was set on fire by the flying cinders. A building adjoining the hotel was considerably damaged, but beyond this the town escaped injury. The brick portion of the hotel escaped with slight damage.

The greatest loser was Mr. Butler, the owner of the hotel, which he purchased at Sheriff's sale for \$16,000. His success was not what he had expected, and he had made arrangements to quit, and was negotiating with several young men from Lancaster to run it during the remainder of the season. The loss on the building and contents was estimated at \$20,000, which was covered by insurance. The wines and liquors in the cellars were valued at \$5,000, of which about one-third were destroyed.

### **The Final Scene.**

Along with others I hurried out to see the fire, and did see the concluding scenes. These were in the highest degree disgraceful. A great many young men had gone out, and their conduct was such as to add to the pitiful scene. Many of these became beastly drunk on liquors rescued from the cellar under the brick portion of the hotel and purchased elsewhere. There were among these men whom I knew in Lancaster, and whom I never suspected of being given to such orgies. It added a still darker shadow to the gloom cast over the town by the conflagration.

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It was my intention when I first thought of writing the history of the "Wabank House" to accompany it with a similar sketch of the only other old-time summer resort established in the county and contemporary with it, "The Ephrata Mountain House." But I found the present undertaking much more troublesome than I had anticipated, so that I was compelled to forego any further mention of the big resort on the Cocalico. At some future time the subject may again be taken up and carried to a conclusion.



## Minutes of the September Meeting.

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Lancaster, Sept. 2, 1904.

The regular September meeting of the Lancaster County Historical Society was held this (Friday) evening in the Society's room, in the Young Men's Christian Association building.

In the absence of President Steinman, Vice President Dubbs occupied the chair. The roll of officers was called, and, on motion, the reading of the minutes of the last meeting (in June) was dispensed with.

The following persons were elected to membership: C. H. Tucker, Leon Von Ossko, Mrs. George Eby, Mrs. George N. Reynolds and Mrs. Anna Irvin, all of Lancaster.

The donations consisted of several old deeds from Ambrose Pownall, of Philadelphia; a hand of flax, from Mr. Frederick Bucher; a copy of the Intelligencer, from Mrs. Wolfersberger, of Philadelphia; two old deeds, from Mr. Lefevre, of Sterling, Ill.; several antiques, from S. M. Sener, Esq.; several volumes from Mrs. Lucy D. Gerhart; two steel engravings, from Miss Virginia T. Gerhart, and the customary exchanges from many parties. Dr. Houston also offered to the Society a large and valuable herbarium, consisting of the flora of Lancaster and Chester counties, but it will not be received until the Society has more ample quarters in which to house its collections, which it is hoped will be in the near future. The thanks of the Society were extended to all the donors, as usual. The Librarian reported having had a number of volumes bound, and also the purchase of several historical books for the library.

The paper of the evening was written and read by the Secretary, F. R. Diffenderffer. The subject was, "The Wabank House; the Story of a Lancaster County Summer Resort." It detailed the history of the famous pleasure resort built on the Conestoga, known by the above caption, half a century ago, but long removed and now almost forgotten. The history of the Wabank House, from its construction to its destruction by fire, was fully detailed. There are still a good many persons living, some being members of the Society, that enjoyed the hospitalities of the place. A fine photograph of the famous house was exhibited. The usual vote of thanks was extended to the author, and it was ordered to be printed in the usual way.

The expediency of moving into more commodious and exclusive quarters was discussed at some length. The sentiment of the members present was seemingly unanimous in favor of the removal, in case certain privileges were conceded.

A petition sent by The Woman's Club, of Columbia, for signatures, requesting the State Capitol Commission to place a statue of Thaddeus Stevens in the proposed State "Hall of Fame," at Harrisburg, was presented by the Secretary. A good deal of discussion, pro and con, ensued. The general sentiment among the members seemed to be a preference for Robert Fulton, a native-born citizen, to the place of honor. A single name was attached to the petition.

The Secretary, who had tendered his resignation at the April meeting, but who had consented to hold over until after the vacation season, again called up the matter, and asked to be relieved of the duties of the position. A considerable discussion en-

sued, the trend of which was an effort to persuade him to withdraw the resignation, but this was refused. The subject was then laid over until the next meeting.

The attendance was very good. The ladies were out in large numbers and interest of the members is on the increase. The Society is in a flourishing condition, and promises to grow in importance and usefulness every year.









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